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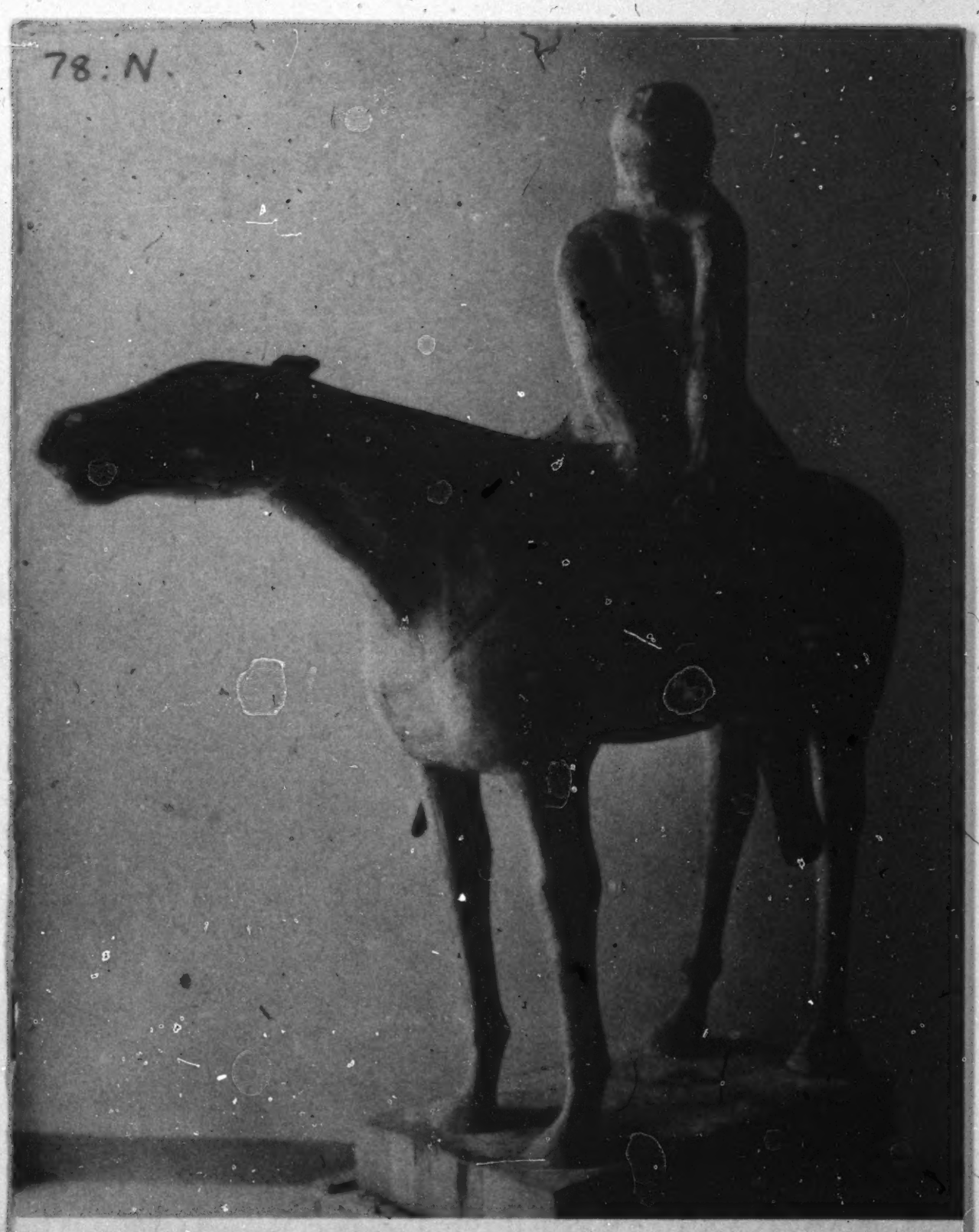

MARINO MARINI

MARINO MARINI

February 14 – March 11, 1950

BUCHHOLZ GALLERY

CURT VALENTIN

32 EAST 57 STREET · NEW YORK

VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM LIBRARY
2. III. 1950.

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MARINO MARINI

BY JAMES THRALL SOBY

"To be an artist is simple," Marini said. "It is simplicity which is difficult. In Italy so much is truly simple — the land, the people. Our discipline is not like that of the North; it is far less intellectual. Yet I suppose I am myself Nordic, a little. At any rate, I believe in cultivation as a protection against confusion. It is impossible to pretend to be a primitive. You asked me, for instance, about the sculpture of China. It is one of the great sources, like the art of Egypt, and of course I admire it."

We were talking in Marini's modern apartment in Milan, a city which favors his intense working schedule because it provides a surrounding contemporary energy, of life and industry. He finds it hard to work in Rome or in any other city where Italy's vast cultural accrual is omnipresent. But if native tradition has long since ceased to be a pressing need for his own development, he knows much about the Italian past. Gradually he mentioned some of his enthusiasms: the

equestrian monument to Marcus Aurelius in the Piazza del Campidoglio at Rome; the medieval sculpture of Giovanni Pisano and Tino da Camaino; the huge wooden horse that served as the model for Donatello's *Gattamelata;* the paintings of Paolo Uccello. In nearly everything Marini admires is to be found a swift, frank vigor — so dominant a quality in his own personality as an artist.

Marini's studio is in the courtyard below his apartment. There he models in plaster, or very rarely carves, his majestic and unforgettable figures, arriving repeatedly at an eloquent balance between raw power and lyric delicacy. "It is necessary," he says, "to preserve the emotion which generates an image. You cannot do so by posing a model, for then you get lost in details that weaken or discolor the original emotion. My sculpture starts from an impression, often instantaneous, whose impact I try to preserve. I include details only if they confirm the impact, as in the case of the rings on the fingers of this woman in bronze — very Italian. I saw the woman herself in the fields, a large woman with powerful legs. She stood like this, and I remembered her, and now here is her sculpture."

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Thus while many of Marini's elders have been concerned with pure form on the one hand, with the re-creation of myth on the other, he customarily takes his impetus from living incident. As long ago as 1936 he started his series of horsemen, it is true, but his full realization of the theme began after he had seen the Lombard peasants fleeing the bombings on their frightened horses. Like Henry Moore, with whom many younger sculptors rank him as prophet of a more explicit humanism, Marini grew rapidly during the recent war. His philosophy is different from Moore's, however, in that he shows little faith in the modern doctrine of "truth to material." Indeed, Marini's patina seems a conspicuous sign of his revolt against this dogma. Nevertheless, he himself attaches less and less importance to applied surfaces. "The whitish patina," he explains, "is only the plaster which sticks to the bronze after the casting. I rub it in, sometimes with wax. Of course time will uncover the bronze again. And in any case, I feel now that I must pass from sensuality toward music. All my career has been like that, divided into periods. One must explore and know, before one can sing."

Marini's voice is one of the deepest and clearest in the newer European art scene. For many years he developed slowly, fighting

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facility harder than doubt, until a decade or so ago his true authority began. If his struggle has been arduous, it has left him tranquil and sure. "To surmount the great accomplishments of the earlier twentieth century," he says, "temperament is possibly more necessary than intelligence." His own temperament is unmistakably Tuscan (he was born in Pistoia and trained at the Academy in nearby Florence). But his closest affinities in Tuscan sculpture are with the pre-Mannerist epoch, before the control of massive form became subsidiary to linear invention. It is not Cellini, and it is not for that matter even Donatello, of whom he makes one think. It is the late thirteenth century artist — was it Giovanni Pisano? — who created the marvelous evangelical bull now in the museum at Siena. This is not to say that Marini's sculpture is medieval in style, but only that its eagerness, awe and intuitive strength are paralleled in the art of a more innocent and spiritual time. It is no accident that, in addition to his other gifts, he should be perhaps the finest portraitist since Despiau. For Marini is as distinguished for his human warmth as for his resolution of the more abstract sculptural problems. "I should like," he says simply, "to defend for humanity its form."

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:

Born in Pistoia, 1901. Lives in Milan. Studied painting and sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts, Florence, under Domenico Trentacoste. Worked as painter and draftsman for a number of years. Often in Paris, 1928 to 1938; traveled widely in other European countries. In this country, he is represented by important works in the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon.

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CATALOGUE

BRONZES (1942-1949)

1 Study for Seated Boxer. Height 7½"
Lent by Mr. John Butler

2 Torso. H. 43"

3 Pomona I. H. 16½"

4 Pomona II. H. 17"

5 Pomona III. H. 16"
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Alex L. Hillman

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VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM LIBRARY

6 Susanna. H. 27½"

7 Portrait of Marina. H. 9¼"
Lent by Mrs. Edward A. Norman

8 Standing Woman. H. 52½"

9 Three Graces. 17¾x16¼"

10 Three Graces. 17½x18"

11 Juggler. H. 36"

12 Kneeling Girl. H. 16¾"

13 Portrait of Lamberto Vitali. H. 8¾"
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Samuel A. Lewisohn

14 Seated Nude. H. 10¾"

15 Standing Nude. H. 31½"

16 Horse and Rider. H. 38¼"
Lent by The Museum of Modern Art

17 Portrait of Carlo Carra. H. 9⅛"

18 Horse and Rider. H. 20"

19 Horse and Rider. H. 39¼"

20 Dancer. H. 68"
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. James T. Soby

21 Horse. H. 29⅛"

22 Portrait of Mrs. Margrit Fischer. H. 14½"
Lent by Mr. Edward L. Fischer

23 Horse and Rider. H. 23"

24 Standing Nude. H. 12¾"
Lent by Mrs. Charles Grace

25 Portrait of Mrs. Nelly Soby. H. 11"
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. James T. Soby

26 Small Horse and Rider. H. 18¼"

27 Small Horse and Rider. H. 16¼"

WOOD

28 Cavalier. 1949. H. 66"

DRAWINGS

29-37

LITHOGRAPHS

38-40

Cover Illustration:

28 Cavalier. Wood